

Democrats have said similar things. This may be inconvenient for them, but it is totally possible. And this Democratic government must not manufacture an avoidable crisis for the sake of their own convenience.

Senate Democrats know what they need to do. Let me lay it out. They will need to write a short resolution amending their previous budget resolution with new debt limit instructions. You have to take that to the Budget Committee, which will probably deadlock, so they will vote to discharge it like they have done for other bills and nominations.

Then a vote to proceed on the floor, a limited vote-a-rama, and a vote on final passage. And then, once the budget has been amended, House and Senate Democrats will use the same fast-track process on a short and simple bill to actually raise the debt limit.

This won't be a multiweek process. It is probably about a week of the Senate's time or a little more. And they won't have to wait on their reckless taxing-and-spending spree either. They can move a stand-alone debt limit bill all on its own.

I understand our Democratic colleagues may feel inconvenienced by this. I understand this may slightly delay their partisan bill, but that is a complaint. That is a complaint, not an excuse.

We have a unified Democratic government that has decided to govern alone. They cannot put partisan ambitions ahead of basic duties. The party-line authors of this reckless taxing-and-spending spree will be the party-line owners of raising the debt limit.

#### AFGHANISTAN

Mr. President, now, on a completely different matter, the free world faces many serious threats from rising authoritarians to resurgent terrorists. Even declining authoritarian powers like Russia pose significant challenges. These threats demand clear-eyed leadership of the world's greatest power.

But earlier this week, at the United Nations, President Biden didn't offer a rallying cry for the world to confront those threats. Instead, he tried to turn the page, literally. He bragged that "I stand here today for the first time in 20 years with the United States not at war. We have turned the page." He further claimed that "we have ended 20 years of conflict in Afghanistan."

Well, that is actually news to the Afghans. For them, the conflict continues and, for the terrorists as well, continues for them too. We may be turning the page, but they are not turning a new leaf. The Taliban-Haqqani government in Kabul is just getting started.

Al-Qaida and ISIS-K are not standing down in their fight against the West; neither are Iran's murdering proxy forces all across the Middle East.

Theocratic killers will not simply disarm themselves because our President offered scripted platitudes to United Nations diplomats. To the extent they care about international

norms, it is because they seek to destroy them. They will not be deterred by what our President calls "relentless diplomacy."

Strangely, but fortunately, President Biden's rhetoric does not even match the actions his own administration is taking. Indeed, the day before his speech, the United States targeted an al-Qaida operative in a drone strike in Syria. The President pretends we aren't at war with terrorism, but neither his own team nor the terrorists believe that. Our unilateral retreat from Afghanistan did not magically usher in a truce with terrorists; it just left us much less able to monitor and combat them.

The consequence of President Biden's slogan-driven policy is not that America's war is over; it is that America now has to fight with one hand tied behind our back.

Back in April, the President's own CIA Director warned this body—that, after retreating, our "ability to collect and act on threats will diminish. . . . That is simply a fact," he said.

In June, the Secretary of Defense told us that al-Qaida could reestablish a safe haven and directly threaten our homeland within 2 years. This is back when the administration still assumed we would have responsible partners in charge in Afghanistan.

Even then, the Secretary said that al-Qaida would reestablish a safe haven and threaten our homeland within 2 years. Certainly that timeline has now moved significantly up. So the question is, Where do we go from here? What is next?

The first step is to get some answers and create some accountability. As I have said before, the administration must answer some tough questions about both past failures and future plans.

Secretary Austin needs to explain why he supported a policy that by his own admission would allow al-Qaida to reestablish a safe haven. And we need an updated assessment of the threat we face now that terrorists, rather than our partners, control Afghanistan.

Oh, but that is just a start. America must reestablish the credible, relentless threat we once posed to terrorists in Afghanistan and beyond. The Taliban's shameful reclamation of Kabul has emboldened America's enemies all around the world. We cannot let them bank a propaganda victory. We must recapture the initiative. We can't retake the initiative with empty talk. This will take arrests, and it will take strikes—visible demonstrations of our resolve.

We must also repair our credibility with our allies and partners. America's resolve to lead the War on Terror fight must be undoubted. This is a collective effort that will take support and contributions from partners all around the world, deeper intelligence sharing, joint efforts to prevent extremists from traveling to safe havens in the first place, and a willingness to repatriate

and prosecute their citizens when they go abroad to conduct terrorism.

We have to get past the radical left's passion for cutting our defense budget down to the bone. President Biden already proposed to cut defense spending after inflation. I understand some House Democrats want to impose even further cuts from that number.

Just this week, to appease a vocal fringe on the far left, House Democratic leadership left defensive assistance for our ally Israel and their Iron Dome on the cutting room floor. A few far-left radicals get veto power over purely defensive assistance for Israel? This is madness. So are the left's efforts to cut back the authorities that our military and intelligence professionals use to protect our homeland. So is the continued talk about emptying Guantanamo Bay, talk about that. For goodness' sake, we just saw four of the five terrorists whom President Obama sprung from Gitmo take up senior positions in the Taliban government—formally in Gitmo; now helping to run the government in Afghanistan. What a combined legacy. The Obama-Biden administration let those terrorists out of prison, and the Biden-Harris administration let them retake an entire country.

No, global wars do not simply end because a President's speechwriter says so. Wars end when America's enemies no longer threaten us. Unfortunately, the Biden administration's decisions to date have not brought that victory any closer.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### VOTE ON PAN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time on the nomination has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Pan nomination?

Mr. PETERS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 68, nays 30, as follows: